

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Superior Concrete Co Inc

Maine Manufacturing Extension Partnership

Superior Concrete Hosts 3 Day Inter-Company Kaizen Event

Client Profile:

Superior Concrete Company has been located in Auburn, Maine, since 1946 and employs approximately 60 people. The company is a division of Oldcastle Precast's Northeast Group which has facilities along the East Coast. Superior Concrete manufactures various types of precast concrete products for the construction industry. They have a strong history of investing in their employees to improve the way that they do business.

Situation:

Superior Concrete completed a Lean training program in the Fall of 2003. This program included all employees going through the TimeWise introduction to Lean Manufacturing Workshop. A focused lean team was taught how to do the following events: 5S Kaizen, Value Stream Mapping Event and a Kaizen event. On February 17, 18 and 19, 2004, the first of six scheduled intercompany Kaizen events was completed and focused on Superior Concrete's Sales Department. The event included eight members from five other Oldcastle Precast plants, along with four Superior Concrete employees. Scott Dickman, Superior's General Manager, said, "The challenge to be the first Kramer (Robert Kramer, President Precast Division) plant to host a Northeast Lean Kaizen event began in earlier January when Superior employees value streamed mapped our sales department's current and future states, identifying 25 possible Kaizen blasts for the 3 day venture. The two teams focused on Superior's priorities and, through team work and brainstorming, developed tools, not only for Superior's road to success, but the Northeast division. The team building success from the intercompany participation was a Northeast landmark paving the way for future intercompany Lean events. Scott Dickman requested that Wayne Messer, Project Manager for the Maine Manufacturing Extension Partnership (Maine MEP), a NIST MEP network, coach and guide his Lean Manager, Peter Allen, through this process with the two groups. It was extremely important that this event be a success, where it was the first of six intercompany events for the Northeast Divisions.

Solution:

During the three-day timeframe, the group was trained using the TimeWise Kaizen 10 Step process. This continuous improvement culture supports and incorporates the PLAN-DO-CHECK-ACT cycle into all aspects of the process. The group was broken into two groups; Commercial Sale Group and Pump Station Sales Group. Each group identified a Kaizen opportunity or a group of related Kaizen opportunities to tackle. The Commercial Sales group identified that there were "no standard price sheets." This team found that there was inconsistent pricing and poor turnaround to customers because up-to-date information was not available and the project managers didn't consistently price items the same way. The Pump Station Sales group identified these issues: 1) No approval process for IM/SM/GM; 2) No standard job folders; and 3) No standard submittal booklet. The team found that the current situation had a lack of flow, loss of internal control, increased cycle time and some confusion.

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The Commercial Sales Kaizen Team measured savings in non-valued added time, lost time, time scheduling, and price variances and came up with a total saving of \$127,500 resulting from standardized Pricing Sheets that could easily be updated using the existing computer software where up-to-date information is stored. Not only was this beneficial for Superior Concrete, but the format to collect the information could be used throughout the Precast Divisions. The Pump Station Sales Team reviewed their target measurements and established that through the root cause summary they now experienced less confusion overall, and improvements to the flow approval process, loss of control, cycle time, no standard and overtime, for a total savings of \$128,300.

Results:

- * Achieved cost savings of \$250,000.
- * Committed to continuation of Lean process.

Testimonial:

"I don't feel we would have been able to accomplish what we did without the help of Wayne Messer, Project Manager for AVCOG/Maine MEP. He has taught us about the principles of Lean Manufacturing and is helping to guide us through the implementation process. Our Lean Journey would have ended quickly without the support of Wayne Messer and the AVCOG/Maine MEP organizations. The positive results of this Kaizen event not only effected our facility but effected our sister plants all along the East Coast. To date, as a result of the Lean work that has been done based on our training through Maine MEP, we have experienced savings resulting in approximately \$250,000. We feel this is excellent considering we have only been doing Lean for a year and a half. We look forward to working with the Maine MEP in the future to help us continue through this process. Our company is committed to continuing in the Lean Process - our Lean journey will never end."

Peter Allen, Lean Manager